

EDUCATION MATTERS

Focus of the Education Sector

With more than two decades of implementation in Laos, Save the Children International in Laos has been working hand-in-hand with the Government of Laos to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal – SDG 4: Quality Education by 2030. Our primary focus centers on enabling access to quality and equitable education for all, accelerating foundation learning, and improving learning outcomes nationwide, especially for the children most impacted by inequality and discrimination. Our approach draws from Save the Children's proven models, which have been successfully implemented in diverse global settings, and are informed by evidence-based expertise in addressing the barriers faced by children from various socio-cultural backgrounds.



What We Do Best

Save the Children localizes and uses our Literacy Boost, Ready to Learn, and Safe School approaches to integrate into and address the priority issues of Lao education. For instance, the current financial conditions deteriorate a rise in drop-out rate, low learning performance, inadequate teaching and learning materials, insufficient teacher professional development, and less awareness of value of education in disadvantaged and remote locations. SCI has worked with the Lao local government across 6 provinces from different parts of Laos namely Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Xiengkhouang, Savannakhet, Attapeu, and Champasack. In programme delivery, we have built capacity and competency for national, sub-national government, and local communities to promote literacy, advocate child rights and participation, gender and inclusion, and create a safe environment to ensure all children are Safe Back to School & Learning.

Save the Children has successfully implemented all literacy and safe school programmes in Laos through 4 key components to accelerate foundational learning skills of early childhood and primary education:

- (1) Institutionalize teacher professional development with a play-based and learner-centered approach by integrating Literacy Boost enablers and activities in the Lao National Curriculum through a reinforcement of the Ministry of Education and Sports' systematic platform such as coaching and monitoring sessions, peer learning circle, online learning initiatives with ICT, etc.
- (2) Create, develop, and distribute quality teaching and learning materials concerning gender equality and social inclusion, particularly ethnic minority aspects, children with disability, visual reading materials, toys, and so on to enrich learning space both in school and at home.
- (3) Mobilize community engagement by strengthening leadership of local authorities through simple and fun activities outside school such as Parental Education Workshop, Reading Corner, Reading Camp, Reading Buddies, Reading Festivals, Child Clubs, etc.



EDUCATION MATTERS

- (4) Generate evidence from the impact evaluation of interventions with the comprehensive tools used worldwide for student and school assessment such as International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA), Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), School Safety Self-Assessment Suite (SSAS) to advocate the reform of educational policies.

Save the Children has initiated and strongly campaigned for the community engagement activity to involve active participation from local authorities and caregivers in every learning development process of children so as to incorporate their roles into the decree of the Village Education Development Committee. In addition, Save the Children has closely collaborated with the National Disaster Management Committee to conduct several humanitarian responses such as a dam collapse in Attapeu, a flood in Savannakhet, COVID-19 mobile vaccination in Luangprabang and Savannakhet, a Handwashing station establishment in Khammouane. We have vast experience in food item distribution and Cash transfer activity for the effective response while creating temporary child-friendly spaces and dispatching supplementary materials to unlock learning continuity from the COVID-19 school disruption.



Future Forwards

Acknowledging the financial challenges facing the education sector in Laos, Save the Children has embarked on a mission to collaboratively transform the educational landscape in partnership with both national and sub-national government bodies. Our goal is to make the education system more child-friendly, participatory, secure, and resilient to various hazards, ensuring access to quality learning for every child in Laos.

As part of our innovative approach, Save the Children has initiated a Digital Classroom pilot program, employing tablets to enhance the literacy and numeracy skills of non-Lao speaking students. Our intention is to expand this program to reach a broader spectrum, including ethnic minority groups and children with disabilities. By doing so, we aim to accumulate tangible evidence of the positive impacts achieved, enabling us to advocate for policy reforms and prioritize the educational needs of these marginalized children, thereby ensuring no child is left behind.